FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

ANOTHER REVALUATION FOR ANOTHER YEAR

It's already evident that, with the oncoming of the 1970's, the world is involved in the creation of still more changes. It's too early to tell if these changes will be for the better or the worse or if from the vantage point of the future they will be seen as the vertiginous beginnings of a great ascent or the first fatal seismographic steps down to a deeper nadir than we have yet experienced. All that's clear now—amid the falling plaster and rising dust of the present—is that suddenly everything is different.

From 1914 on, our civilization has been busy adapting itself to the century. There is probably not an item in our current lives that has not been revised out of all recognition or replaced by something wholly new—this includes everything from light-fixtures and the slick sleek look of our architecture to the sequence of our thoughts within the chains of cells in our brains. By the close of the 1960's, it now seems, that work had been accomplished. There are elaborations yet to be made, maybe many masterpieces of intellect and art, but the style of the twentieth century has been forged—bold and unique and by this time universal. Utopia is here—the utopia that has been devised for us by the great men of the era, Freud and Ford, Enrico Fermi and Buckminster Fuller, Jr.

As far as I am able to see, though, not a one of us believes we inhabit a utopia. I haven't overheard any euphoria. On the other hand, the sounds of rebellion and riot have stopped lately, and the signs of violence have burnt out in the sky. A certain comfort has entered our psyches. We seem to be enjoying a breather—without very much enjoyment. What we are doing, I suspect, is waiting. And what we are waiting for—deep down in ourselves, where we have sensed the first trembles—must be the beginnings of the next century, which just as certainly as the Twentieth replaced the Nineteenth will replace our ways with others entirely different.

One of the differences already apparent is the absence among us of great men. None are left, none at all, with the exception of a few relics like the ninety-year-old Pablo Picasso. The fact is that, with all respect due to his incredible accomplishment, Picasso has now taken on the oddity of a living anachronism. There is about him something as dated and unnecessary and almost foolish-seeming as if he were a pterodactyl found surviving into our times. That any human being should presume to possess his powers or fame or wealth now seems as antiquated and picturesque as the vanities of Richard Wagner or Balzac or Caesar...or Hitler or Stalin. We have come (with good reason) to distrust, dislike, and disregard all supermen. We are inclined nowadays to send people like that to the psychiatrist or jail. We do not want anyone to be "great" any longer. Competence is the one virtue we will tolerate. I think what we want is that all men and women should be openly bravely and unembarrassedly human.

This change in peoples' attitude was apparent on a trip we took in the autumn. The exceptional people we met were all engaged in helping others. They were remarkable individuals, highly intelligent, educated, talented, hard-working, and inspired. There was not one who had the makings of "a character"—those ingredients were relegated to the elderly and the neurotic young. Putting aside all the old-fashioned trappings of special abilities and the special claims they used to make on society, the individuals who had the most to offer were devoting them to the welfare of groups. Instead of fortune and fame (the "spur" of even such a man as John Milton) they were seeking the well-being of many. Although their responsibilities and leadership were obvious, they displayed no flamboyance or self-consciousness concerning their value or importance to their communities. Their positions were evident, they received all the fundamental courtesies and respect, but they asked and got no special treatment for the services they rendered. What's more, their satisfaction and happiness in the usefulness of their talents and lives were as real and unspoken as if they were dealing with mem-

bers of their own family. Their brotherly and sisterly interest in and care for the people around them were clearly rewards enough.

The alienation of gifted individuals has been a major theme of the twentieth century. It would seem that in the twenty-first we are going to be involved in the evolution of a new relationship between them and society. This is what we seem to be about to be on the verge of—I hope it's so: the establishment of a communal society so enlightened that instead of devoting himself to the establishment of his own superiority the unusual man will see his best chance of fulfillment in doing for others—materially and intellectually and emotionally and spiritually—what they are unable to do for themselves. If our insights during our trip out of New York were accurate, and if those extraordinary persons we met are real harbingers of the future, then the next century is going to be a great and truly revolutionary time. Mankind will finally become a family. The world will be a fellowship. —P. G.

GOD WITH US

Emily Sargent Councilman

God gave to man the greatest Gift
The night the Savior came
A new-born Child, yet "God with us"—
Emmanuel, His name.

The world is dark, yet shining stars
Reflect the glory of that night;
And humble hearts who give His love
Still shed abroad His truth and light.

HELP ME TO UNITE

Helen Gee Woods

Help me, O Lord, to be a clearing house;
For here I stand divided.... Caught in a maze
Between two forces. One would break my course,
And channel grave direction to my days;
The other break my will, give rise to doubt,
And to impermanence and wavering.
Each one would drive me to the sea far out—
The lonely Isle of sad remembering.

Help me, O Lord, to free and clear my chart,
A winding labyrinth of uncertainty.
Help me to unite the whole and to heal the heart;
Transform me as a new-born entity!

THREE LITTLE PRAYERS

Ray Allen Albert

AT DAWN

Give us cheerful hearts and serene patience for the duties of this day. Help us to do all things to reflect Thy spirit and honor Thy name.

AT LIGHT OF DAY

We thank Thee for the morning glow and humbly pray that we reflect this light throughout the day.

IN THE MORNING

We thank Thee for this day. May we find Thy pattern in living. Give us wisdom, courage, and faith to follow it.

"THE SPIRIT LIVES, ALL ELSE IS MORTAL"

Paul Dudley White, M.D.

My experience with patients and other individuals through the years has convinced me that in many instances prayer has a favorable psychosomatic influence. It tends to counteract the physiological effects of anxiety, it favors better sleep, and stimulates one to better efforts. In fact, devotion to one's work can itself serve as a form of prayer. This effect of prayer is personal for the individual himself or herself.

. . . prayer is a form of religious motivation for better ways of life, ethical behavior, and spiritual uplift. What is good for better ways of life is good for the spirit, is good for the body too, and however one may view life after death one can assuredly agree with the motto which appears in one of the illustrations in Vesalius' great *Anatomy*, namely: "The spirit lives, all else is mortal."

(courtesy of James L. Jenks)

ANGEL TRUMPETERS

Marion J. Richardson

Hear the angels' trumpets sound
over the housetops all around,
echoes over mountains and valleys rebound
into the air and on the ground.
The lengthened notes, soft and clear,
steal upon the listening ear,
then tremble and melt away,
leaving the strains to decay
against some ancient marble wall
like stars in a dying fall.

HAUNTED HUNTERS

Angelo De Luca

Stalking white and sprightly game
Who like angels in disguise
Brought bright visions to the eyes,
Lustily the hunters came.
Shame for their tender selves they hid!
They're no longer smug with joy:
Now the visions are destroyed,
They would weep for what they did.

FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

Josephine H. Voracek

Snow is falling fast tonight. One by one the flakes make their earthbound plunge. Drabness of winter is soon gone and the world takes on a picturesque appearance. Under street-lamps the sidewalks look as if they are formed of diamond dust, scintillating and glittering. No sound comes as the flakes fall gently to earth.

The world is hushed and evergreens, shrubs and trees, stand in stately silence looking as if weighed with this soft white glory. The grandeur and solemnity of this moment brings me peace, harmony and beauty.

Taking a deep breath, I close my eyes tightly. The snowflakes fall on my hair and stick to my eyelashes. I feel their

moistness against my face, but I feel also the warmth and great comfort of this utter silence.

I get the feeling I am suspended between two worlds. The one, a world of sounds, colors, and substances–the other a world of the universes of moons, stars, and distant nebulae. I can almost hear the spheres' eternal music and feel the lightness of the soul freed from material existence.

My entire being feels inspired and filled with love and mercy begetting a new life through closer attunement with the spiritual consciousness that pervades all things. God wraps the world in this soft white covering of peace and love that we might rest awhile and in contemplation be refreshed.

CONTINUITY

Virginia Lytle Waller

A man must
Make a garden
Wherever he is,

Whether soil
Is loamy
Or climate right.

His spirit
Requires of him
a garden,

To keep in remembrance
Beginning and end,
And beginning again.

TO ONE WHO GRIEVES

Carla Patsuris

Unhappy Infant
(Infant of the Higher Self),
Lessons in courage
Must daily be explored.

Have patience, have faith,
Grief—the unwelcome guest—
Departs in time....
Peace is then restored.

PERSPECTIVES

Carla Patsuris

The shadow of the past
Is wrapped in golden spirit
Though well you know you'd find but brass
If you went stepping near it;
Then, with more grief in your heart
Than a heart should hold,
You'd rush away, yet—glancing back—
See only gold.

Curtains fall
Between old age and youth:
The old look back, the young ahead,
And neither sees the truth.

An Excerpt from. . .

THE MESSENGER

AND HIS TREASURE *by Francis Merchant*

Success and Failure

A thin partition divides success and failure, commented one of the Messenger's hearers. How do you define it?

Failure in a good cause, responded the Messenger, is better than success in a bad one. What a person attempts to do is more important than whether he failed or succeeded in doing it. The nature of the endeavor bears scrutiny before we consider the consequences of action. It is quite possible for a man to succeed, and lose his soul in the process — and to fail, yet strengthen thereby his spiritual integrity. Evaluations depend on the touchstone that is used, or, in different terms, which mirror one looks in.

For a caterpillar success may consist in finding a juicy green leaf on which to nibble; for a bear, the discovery of a pot of honey; for a business man, sizable profits; for a farmer, a full crop; for a mystic, union with God. Definitions, it is clear, vary widely; hence must we cast upon them the light of evaluation.

A tree fulfills itself by bearing fruit. Proper environmental conditions insure this result. But man, too, bears fruit. In him the universe becomes conscious of itself. The fruit that ripens within him is divinity. Failing to understand his own greatness, he does not manifest it. Unaware of his meaning, he spends his life gathering a pocketful of question marks. Deceived by the Great Illusion, he accepts his own irrelevance in the universe and does not nourish the seed of his spiritual greatness. This condition is true failure. Defining

himself as the flotsam and jetsam of the planet, he wanders wearily through life unaware of the treasure he bears within himself. Thus the rose in him never flowers and the lotus never opens its petals. Though he may discover many useful things, he does not discover himself — the most ominous omission of all. Failure in all other endeavors is not of the essence, belonging to distinctly secondary considerations, but inability to comprehend the nature of the treasure he bears darkens the gate of destiny.

Better failure in small things and success in the central issue than success in small things and failure in the central issue. The Pearl of Great Price is worth far more than a vault of jingling coins. A person may succeed in avoiding the thorns of life, yet fail to pluck the rose.

The flute of infinity plays within the precincts of time, and he who hears and responds to its call comprehends the meaning of success.

A PRAYER *Fitz-Hugh Ball Marshall*

I pray for thee as the Christians pray.
May Christ go out with thee on thy way,
And keep thee safe awake, or asleep,
And soften the blows that make thee weep,
And guard thy soul at its employ
And give thee grace and love and joy,
And hold thee safe 'twixt two extremes
When either would shatter thy shining dreams,
And bless thee at the narrow pass
Where thou alone must go, alas,
And ever watch over thee and then —
God give thee peace! And now, Amen.

SUPPLICATION: Grant me an understanding heart that I may share the sorrows and heartache of all the world. *Edith Hayes*

DAYS OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Catherine Cabeen Houck

The sacrament of Holy Communion in the Methodist Episcopal Church South was meaningful and beautiful even before I was old enough to partake of it. Our "remembrance" table, placed back of the rail, was truly as separate as the bread and wine behind the screen in early days before John and Charles Wesley brought a new faith to simple folk. This table covered so carefully with its cloth starched and creased was always an object of mystery. I knew that when the cloth was lifted I would see the bread on a silver plate and a silver chalice containing the wine. The suspense of waiting to see this done kept my mind on the service. I had probably seen the bread the day before, for until the last year of her life my grandmother made it—small unleavened squares. I knew, too, that when all had participated and the service ended, she would carefully collect all that was unused and take it home with her to be burned in the kitchen range. Once when I asked why she didn't feed it to the chickens, she replied patiently and kindly that it had been blessed and must be consumed in dedication.

Children's Day and Rally Day were the highlights of Sunday school. On these two occasions the sermon was dispensed with and Sunday school moved up to eleven o'clock. The only difference in observance of the two days, if my memory is correct, was the season of the year. On each of these special days we would sing solos or choruses. Pantomimes were played out to the accompaniment of familiar hymns. Sometimes we held cards on which

were engraved and decorated letters spelling out "Welcome" or a favorite verse, "God is love" or "Come unto me." While someone recited a poem memorized laboriously for the occasion, each letter popped up at the crucial time—or so it was hoped.

Children's Day, falling in June, had top billing, for in northern Louisiana roses were in profusion. On one observance of this day when I was ten years old we had an especially lovely program. The "young ladies" of the congregation made large half-wreaths of white, red, and pink roses. These were held by older boys of the Sunday school who stood inside the two front doors. At the appointed time all the other boys and girls marched in pairs underneath the arches. Each girl carried an armful of roses. On a late June day when the sun is warm on my small rose garden in Pennsylvania, I catch the fragrance of those flowers I carried on that memorable day.

In my childhood days, Thanksgiving had more of a religious significance than it does now and was observed by families getting together; married sisters and brothers came home with their children, and all the youth were delighted to be reunited with rarely seen cousins. Services held in our church at ten-thirty in the morning were short and significant. From there we went to our maternal grandparents for the remainder of the day. It was a short walk, and as autumn lingered long in Bossier Parish we found oak and maple leaves to shuffle through. In such weather we had not yet begun wearing winter coats and usually could spend the hours after mid-day dinner playing games out of doors. I hope the day has as much meaning for children now as it did for me then. There was a strong sense of family ties or clanship among the citizens of our town, and there is nothing more truly blessed than the family bond.

When afternoon was deepening into dusk, our mother would call us in, and reluctantly we made our rounds of goodbyes and walked to our home, a distance of two city blocks. The golden gentleness of this late autumn day increased the depth of feeling that Thanksgiving brought me. Walking home, with backward look we saw the quick red glow in the west when the sun sank below the horizon with no lingering twilight, while looking ahead we might see the first faint star-prick over our home.

The climax of all Sunday school events was surely the Christmas celebration with special music and the repetition of the story of Christ's birth. There was no creche, no special decor like today's, but the dark green of native pine and a profusion of holly bright with berries gave the simple white interior the appropriate look of a winter scene. On some specified evening, a short service was held at which each attendant of Sunday school was given a box of chocolates. The box was a replica of a church with stained-glass windows painted on its sides: a string across the top made it easy to be carried home. This was a sufficient gift, for we knew that the real Christmas tree would follow on Christmas Eve and would fulfill all expectancy.

For this one evening, regardless of past rivalry and differences, all the churches united in the Bossier Parish courthouse. It was truly a community affair, with parents and children filling every seat in the courtroom. The tree reaching the ceiling was always placed on the judge's stand. It was handsomely decorated with tinsel, fragile balls, and other objects loaned by willing families, and on all the tips of the branches were small wax candles. The glow from these made a flickering and mysterious light on the gifts on the tree and on those piled underneath. The older boys who wanted to be present but who would have scoffed at the idea of coming to just see a Christmas tree stood in a circle around the platform with snuffers which occasionally were used to extinguish a too-jubilant flame.

Santa Claus, who was chosen for his height and size, would come racing up the stairs, jingling his bells and hallooing to all. He bounded into the room, thrilling each expectant child. Everyone received gifts, families and friends and local merchants seeing to it that no one was left out. A spirit of love and friendship enveloped the town as "Good night!" and "Merry Christmas!" were called back and forth in the starlight of this winter's evening.

Give what you have. To some it may be better than you dare to think. —Longfellow

Great ideas come into the world as gently as doves. If we live attentively, we shall hear amid the uproar of empires and nations a faint flutter of wings, the great stirring of life and hope.

—Albert Camus

IMMORTALITY

Ruth Andrews Crorkin

The last red ray of day has burned to dusk,
And flash of star-fire lights the twilight mist.
I stand and bare my soul unto the night,
And worship its white-flaming sacredness.
Each tiny leaf, each star, each gleaming tree
Grow to be part of me, till I know well
That I am one with this white Mystery!

Another day has softly slipped away
To darkness, and another night now dreams
To pearl-pure dawn, wrapped in a silver veil.
God's perfect peace drifts round me where I wait....
Never can Beauty die! Such nights as this
But pass beyond the range of mortal sight,
To merge in timelessness and living light!

Never can Beauty die! Each rapturous hour
That glorifies existence, each heart-tie
We cherish, every dream too dear to share,
All loveliness that seems so quick to pass
Is part of us forever, ours to keep,
When we but see with eyes that pierce Today
To the Tomorrow of Eternity!

HOW, WHENCE, WHITHER, — BIRDS?

Rose Noller

*"Ultimately all *** winged creatures will return to the invisible element of the Air Kingdom, where they will *** advance into Devas (angels) of the Air Element."* —*Flower Newhouse*

What would our planet be if minus birds? —
Which strain, with other winged ones, ascend
Into etheric Kingdom without words
To humans, to fleeting vistas without end!
What would returning Spring be without song,
Without the evanescent rainbow flight, —
We with our sprays and Babel Towers, wrong
Not yet identified, in songless night.
At this Christmas time when, seriously,
Some take attending Angels and the Birth,
Who knows but birds evolve to kingdoms free
From guns and poisons of the planet earth, —
This Kingdom, delicate with song and wing,
Evolve to Angels to announce a King?

MORNING REVELATION

Judy Shepps

So now you know something you didn't before.
That humanity includes you, that you
Are now immune from the paralyzing confusion
that
God, in the person of good, is

Not consistent

or even constant

and

All that is can vanish!

Congratulations!

You are paying the membership price for

Knowing what you seek to know. For

What has eluded you in feeling and

being.

Congratulations!

You are becoming the hard way, the

Only way (and)

Anyone who ever told you it

Would-Could be different

Lied.

Congratulations!

You

have learned the shriek and

hide game of man.

You

are a good actor

(performing so well without a script)

and good actors live roles as

much as they create, and

sometimes destroy, them.

Congratulations!

The duality of the boy-man is

Becoming singularized.

You know something you didn't before.

You know you exist.

Congratulations!

THE ETERNAL NOW

Mildred Long

"I am in you today and for you today everything that you can become at some future time."

Is it health you need? "I am thy God who healeth thee." Now! To receive God's indwelling power as health *now* will enable you to do the same the next moment and the next till you are completely healed. If you do not begin now this moment, when do you expect to begin? This moment is *all* you have!

Do you want inspiration? Then breathe in the Divine Spirit —in spiration—into your whole being *now*.

Do you need guidance? Then get very still, look at Jesus, center your thought on Him and expect and receive direction for your immediate future. Now! Now is all you have. Do not postpone reception.

Do you seek inner joy? Then open your whole being to God's joy. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." As you receive this joy it will permeate your whole being and complete your healing.

God's presence in your inner consciousness is love, peace, joy. These will do the healing. Like sunlight spreading across the lake; like a full flowing stream of refreshing water; like the warmth of the sun's rays permeating your body tissues—so the presence of God within is healing, refreshing, cleansing, renewing. Begin now, this moment. Continue on—next moment—on and on, till you come to the continual consciousness of God's indwelling Spirit. He is your all-sufficiency for every need. "To live in this moment richly and fully is to transcend time."

He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it. —Thoreau

IN BELIEVING *Alice Mackenzie Swaim*

Into Thy hands, I place my health and heart,
My doubt and dreaming, every minute part
Of my day's living and my night's soft rest,
For in believing I am truly blessed.

THAT JEWISH WINTER FESTIVAL

Samuel M. Silver

When Christmas begins to effervesce on all sides, all Americans are aware of a Jewish winter festival which often adjoins Christmas and is sometimes referred to as "the Jewish Christmas." This is erroneous. Chanukah is a holiday in its own right and has behind it an intriguing story.

Pronounced with a gargle, *Chanukah* is a Hebrew word meaning Dedication. The holiday, observed for eight days, is so called because it commemorates the reconstruction of the ancient temple in Judea some 165 years before the Christian era.

The sanctuary had to be rededicated because it had been contaminated by the Syrian minions of a monarch named Antiochus. Heir by several removes of one-third of the empire of Alexander the Great, Antiochus had decreed that all of his subjects must pay him taxes and also adopt his kind of idolatry.

Everyone within his hegemony did as Antiochus commanded except the inhabitants of tiny Judea. Taxes they would pay, but they would not bend a knee to the molten gods.

The result was one of the most lopsided conflicts in history. The small Judean forces, led by the redoubtable Judah Maccabee and his four brothers, did not seem to have a chance of standing off the world's mightiest military force.

But stand them off they did. In three years of warfare, during which for the first time in battlefield annals guerilla tactics were employed, the tough Judeans defeated their foes. To do this they had to cope with the first recorded use of elephants as military devices. They had to get rabbinical authority to violate the Sabbath, since the sly Syrians kept attacking on the Jewish day of rest until the Judeans decided it was better to live on their feet than die on their knees. They had to be inspired to incredible heights of intrepidity by the cause which enlisted their efforts.

Victorious, the Judeans proceeded to cleanse the temple. A legend has it that the amount of oil available to kindle the Eternal Light in the sanctuary was enough for only one day, but miraculously endured for eight days. The legend is a dramatic way of saying that a good cause, upheld at first by few, will win augmented support if zealously pursued. The holiday is observed for eight days, with an additional taper lit in the holiday candelabrum each night. Special prayers and songs, gift-giving and contributions to charity, reminders of the debt we owe to the valor of freedom fighters in all ages, are all rehearsed in synagogue and home.

The festival hymn called "Rock of Ages" salutes a God's "arm" and looks toward the total disappearance of tyranny. A Chanukah prayer calls upon the worshipper to "battle against apathy, ignorance and intolerance which still threaten to extinguish Thy lamps and to destroy Thine altars." The holiday candelabrum contains not eight lights but nine. The ninth candle is called "The Servant's Candle" and symbolizes the Jew's mandate to add light and enlightenment to society.

Did the Chanukah story actually take place? Yes, it did. The saga is chronicled in the Books of the Maccabees, part of the post-Biblical series of narratives known as the Apocrypha. Coins bearing the name of Simon the Maccabee have been unearthed in the Holy Land. Is it possible for a few Judeans to have triumphed over so mighty a host? Skpetics should remember George Washington, the R.A.F. versus the Luftwaffe, and the exploits of the

fighting Jews of Israel, the latter-day Maccabeans who held off seven Arab nations determined to bash them into the sea.

During the festive and uplifting Christmas season, many Jews are swirled into the holiday's orbit. This is understandable. It would also make sense for Christians to share in the Chanukah spirit, for were it not for the bravery of those who gave the world Chanukah, monotheism as a faith might have disappeared. Christians need only turn to the tenth chapter of the Book of John to learn that Jesus celebrated the Feast of Dedication—or the Feast of lights, as Chanukah sometimes is known.

The first recorded struggle for freedom of conscience in the annals of history, Chanukah merits the respect of all who cherish the light of liberty.

THE MISFIT *Pollyanna Sedziol*

"That one just doesn't fit in."
She sighed, shaking her head
over the broken vase
and the shattered boy...

And I wondered.
Puzzles have pieces for fitting
and patterns have pieces for fitting
but life has people.

What right has anyone
to force another into a mold
or onto a Procrustean frame
unsuitable?

I once read a poem which said
"accept him just as he is"...
Eve must not have eaten
enough of the apple
to make this knowledge known.

In spite of a birth-injury, neuro-surgery, excruciating pain, and constant double vision, David Harris DeBerry spent the twenty-seven years of his life creatively. His friends called him "The Happy Warrior." His favorite prayer was: "Holy Father, if we thanked Thee every breath from now throughout Eternity, we could never thank Thee enough." Dictating to his mother, he composed many poems, such as "Whispers of Flowers Wild."

WHISPERS OF FLOWERS WILD

David Harris DeBerry

The language of the flora wild
Is sometimes gently low:
The Wild Rose tells of love untamed;
Rosemary murmurs "Long ago..."

He gathered for her Queen Anne's Lace;
He named himself the Loco Weed;
From childhood days he was her slave;
He never wanted to be freed!

A nosegay of Marsh Violets shy,
Innocent Bluets for her scented hair,
Would turn his love to Dandelion;
And he was helpless in her snare.

Swamped in woodland secret sighs,
Lilies guarding Primrose youth,
Sweet William wed Spring Beauty
In a Morning-Glory truth.

His daily search for blossoms gay

Would evoke her laughter sweet;
He would lay Pink-Lady's-Slippers
And loving heart across her feet.

The Purple Trillium of his joy
Would stir Wake-Robin's jealous mood,
But soon a frail Anemone
Replaced the Fireweed he had wooed.

"Mystery in the woodlands,"
Whispered Hyacinths so sad;
She left him when the Winter snowed,
In a lacy, blue dress clad.

Now he yearns again to kiss her—
To touch her lips, her hand;
To hear her call to bring wild blooms;
Her wish was his command.

No longer Twinleaf heralds Spring;
Blue Phlox cry in rain;
Time was when Adder's-Tongue spoke just
Of dreams and not of pain.

He climbed the hill to reach her;
flame sunset kissed his cheek;
If only he could hold her;
If only she would speak.

His arms embraced her flowers wild;
He dropped them with a start!
On her grave bloomed lone Forget-Me-Nots;
At her feet burst a Bleeding-Heart.

PORTRAIT OF FAITH

Eleanor Ebersole

The old man rose. One could see from the back that his tall form was bent with age. He moved slowly, never looking down to check his footing. As he turned, his face revealed a warmth and a clearness which should not have grown old.

The old man was beautiful, with white hair, long as the modern times, and folds about eyes and mouth that made a gracious care seem permanent. Finally he spoke. He read from the ancient word with the truth of one who had lived long before the word was questioned. Within him there appeared an assurance that came from believing since the birth of time.

The picture of him standing, leading others on, held within it a youth seldom known even among the young. He couldn't be old, yet his age proved something. Proved life, perhaps. Certainly faith. The tall fragile frame could still, almost, run a race, or capture any prize desired.

"The course set before us," he went on, "is the same as the one left behind."

It must be true because he held his youth in his age.

"As he lived, so shall we," the old man concluded. With that he walked among the people.

This man, who should not have aged, seemed to be unaware that in living in two centuries he held an agelessness that defied an end to anything he loved. In his face lived the truth of faith.

CHRISTMAS, the festival of giving. Giving not from a sense of duty, not as a return for receiving, but from a glad sense of recognition and awareness that in a world where such gifts are given it is fitting and appropriate that man too should himself give gifts. —Emma J. Evans

BROTHERS ALL

Leonard Opalov

Let us unwarily approach
the white light of day.
It is better that way.
Let us call
each other: brother
and embrace truth
in a merger
of brotherly love.

THE JOURNEY BACK

Emma S. McLaughlin

I'm getting ready to go on that annual journey again. I started planning for it as soon as the first nip of frost seared the flowers in the window boxes, as soon as nature began to tint the leaves delicately with autumn colors, as soon as I saw the first formation of wild geese sail across the sky, heading south.

Like most people preparing for a journey, I began to make mental lists of all the things I would need to take with me, or at least all of those things that would add to the joyousness of the occasion, for this will be no ordinary journey. You see, I am going to Bethlehem. Although I have been there many times (and I'm sure you have also), still I look forward to it with such great expectation, that it would appear to be my very first visit. I wonder why I go back so seldom.

My list of needs grows larger with every passing day, but there are always the treasured ones I could not possibly leave

behind. You see, *they* have become a tradition.

There will be evergreens; I will wreathe them around the doorway, around the angel on the organ, and fashion them into a centerpiece for the dining-room table. To me they represent fraggrance reminiscent of the gifts carried by the wisemen on that first Christmas. Their green beauty is suggestive of everlasting life.

Of course, there will be candles; who can think of journeying to Bethlehem without them? Just remembering that busy street, that crowded inn, and the little stable, kindles a light of faith in the darkest heart. Some of my candles were gifts from travelers I met along the Christmas road in other years. I could not bear to *burn* those. I will bring them carefully from their wrappings, and experience, once again, the joy of friendship. I will burn new bayberry candles, and the familiar household objects will take on a new look—become radiant in the magic circles of light.

There must be a tree. No—not a silver one; my family would think that much too modern, too garish. Our tree will be a green one, full, with sweeping branches. It will stand naked for a day or two, while we enjoy the beauty of its form and imagine how lovely it will be decked out in shimmering baubles. The trimmings will be lifted gently from boxes and tissue-paper wrappings; some of them are very old and fragile. Some have made the journey many times before, in the company of my parents and grandparents; some are cherished memories of the childhood of my own children. We treasure thoughts of hands that touched them lovingly so long ago.

I have made a list of gifts to take for those I love, for there is great happiness in the giving of a gift; with it we give a part of ourselves. And who could approach Bethlehem without a gift, or forget the greatest gift given to us in that humble place?

I could not start the journey without music—without the singing of dear, familiar carols, without Bach, Handel, the soul-sweeping majesty of *The Messiah* and the glorious "Hallelujah" chorus. Almost I hear the angels singing!

I have taken the time to sort out my thoughts—to still the inner turmoil, to sweep my hearth clean and prepare myself for the miracle of the journey. Now it is almost time to go.

The house seems to call a welcome, for there are friends who will make the journey with me. Odors blend together, the odor of spices, pine, and fir, the odor of melting tallow from the glowing candles. The gifts are stacked and waiting.

I open the front door. The street is aglow with lights and the holy hush of new-fallen snow. Truly this *is* a special night. For a moment I stand still, breathing deeply, cold air searing throat and lungs. I look up; the sky has cleared. The stars are close, pressing upon me. Look! There in the east! That one bright star!

The silence opens to the sound of singing; carollers, warmly wrapped, have rounded the corner. The journey has started.

Come! Let us hurry to Bethlehem and worship the King.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Lois Mae Cuhel

It is trust beyond all doubting
In God Who rules above!
It is obedience without question,
It is resting in His love.
It is smiling through the teardrops,
It is struggling through each test;
It's the firm belief Our Father
Is a God Who knoweth best!
It's the knowledge He will give us
Light for each step of the way,
Grace for problems we encounter,
And the strength for each new day!

CHRISTMAS JOY *Lillian Wade Koerner*

Sing, ye little children,
to honor Mary's Son.
Sweet Babe of Bethlehem
calls you to His manger
to bless the world with Him.

Sing, ye little children,
repeat to heedless men
their own Saviour's Story—
bring gifts of grateful hearts
lifted to His glory.

Sing, ye little children,
His angels have rejoiced
to see Love undefiled,
too simple for grown-ups,
flow freely, child to child.

Sing, ye little children,
Christ's radiant Star reflects
in each young happy face.
Its Light is heaven's sign
of His abiding grace.

Sing, ye little children,
this is God's holy day
to laud Christ Jesus' birth—
Praise Him with glad tidings
of Christmas joy on earth!

MEAN *(Pearlee) Mary L. Wantner*

To soar, we must humbly kneel;
Soar on wings of prayer, aver
We yearn to banish blunder, flaw;
Must yield impeding willful won't,
Humbly seek guidance to be as one.
Kneel humbly; to soar, we must.

MEDITATION *Helen Margalith*

I am the God of Abraham. I hear every song, for the universe is Mine. Bathe in the radiance of its cleansing stars. Enjoy the patterns formed by delicately dancing moonbeams. Take the warmth of the sun. Behold the rich nourishing earth and meditate upon the mystic mountains.

I am the God of Isaac. A muted cry ascends unto Me, and I respond to the faintest of sighs. I will release you from any altar on which you are bound. We shall walk both of us together that I may bless all your labor. Treasure this, your inheritance. Dig once more the refreshing wells of Abraham, your father, for they are deeply rooted in an abundant land.

I am the God of Jacob. The secret things are Mine. I open the deep recesses of the heart and explore even the barren wasteland of the soul. I forgive all sin; blot out all iniquity; heal all wounds. Stand before me in confident silence, for I have breathed into you the breath of life. You are an eternally living being. Accept, therefore, the challenge of life, then you will conquer death.

Prasied be Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, great, mighty, and exalted. Amen.

GREETINGS *Erica May Brooks*

Like the mountain stream, singing
Its lyric song all along its hidden course;
Around rugged boulder, past bleak barren waste
Through vale and lea, on — out to sea.
So must we hold the Christmas theme
Crystal clear throughout the year.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE *Mark Halpern*

One of the characteristics of our age is the propensity to label and classify every person according to vocational, financial, and psychological criteria. But deep down under the skin, in the innermost recesses of eternal being, all of us are primarily of one broad general category. For we are all seekers, belonging to the one great human family of immortal souls.

And what is it we are all seeking so persistently through so many diversified activities? Most of us would say it is happiness. Many would put it as peace of mind and soul. Others, more specific, would term it security—the average man calling it success or wealth. A few here and there, of a more philosophical or metaphysical temperament, would say they were seeking truth and the solution to the riddle of the universe.

Each of these answers is correct insofar as the individual life is concerned, each person having his own freedom to think that what he is seeking will prove to be of the greatest value and good to his life. However, it was Jesus of Nazareth who told us that in reality we are seeking a far greater treasure. It is the Pearl of Great Price, which the Master gave us as a symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven within.

When we ask ourselves just what the Kingdom of Heaven within really means, it becomes apparent that it cannot mean our thoughts and our memories. Introspection, also retrospection,

though processes of consciousness, cannot in themselves be the substance of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose atmosphere, we are told, is of the peace that passeth all understanding. Indeed, some of the most acute anguish and sorrow man can know comes from his own thoughts—especially memories. True, thoughts and memories are also a source of happiness; yet it is only a relative and temporary kind of happiness, for it is but the opposite of the sorrow found in the same thought and memory substance. At any moment the stream of thought and memory may reveal the negative side or sorrow.

The Kingdom of Heaven within is that eternal reality beyond time. It is that timeless dimensionless spirit within each of us wherein the memory of the past, the life of the actual present, and thoughts of the future, all merge and are transcended in the peace that passeth all understanding.

In the days when Jesus of Nazareth spoke his parables of eternal truth, there was one among his most devoted followers, a man of middle age, called Zorab. From the first moment that he heard about the Pearl of Great Price, Zorab made up his mind to seek and find it.

Through listening to the words of the Master, Zorab knew he must search for the Pearl within; that it was not a solid tangible pearl of material substance. It was a pearl far more valuable than all the perishable treasures of the earth—because it was eternally imperishable and thus without price, for it was the Kingdom of Heaven within.

And so Zorab began to give himself increasingly to periods of deep meditation, probing the hidden and sacred depths of his being in an endeavor to find the key that would open the golden gates to the Kingdom of Heaven within. But the more he searched the more he seemed to find the distracting memories and images of his past. Some were pleasant, and he spent precious hours in living them over and over again. Lingering on in that garden of shadowy flowers of the past, he kept breathing in the wistfully solacing fragrance of their spiritual unreality.

However, there were other memories not so pleasant, but ugly and shameful; reminding him of misfortune and defeat, of bitter humiliation and crushing disillusion, until he found himself utterly helpless and bewildered.

The more he tried to flee those specters of the past the more they seemed to hold him in their thrall; flitting up and down the corridors of his consciousness, haunting him with their mocking faces, until he felt he was going mad.

It was then he bethought himself of the Master, who would be sure to understand and help him.

And so it was, one twilight hour, after Jesus had spoken to his rapt followers and was making ready to move on to the home of friends to break bread with them, that Zorab advanced hesitantly to the side of the Master. He stood there, eyes lowered before that radiant face, not knowing how to begin.

The Master did not prompt him to speak. Instead, Jesus gave utterance to just one brief sentence, words that Zorab had heard in that golden voice before, but which now engraved themselves so deeply and illuminatingly in his consciousness that he felt he could never forget their significance:

"No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God...."

That was all.

A great light descended upon Zorab, pervading his entire being. It was as though a heavy veil dropped from before his eyes and in the revelation of that fateful moment he saw clearly wherein had been his error. Instead of concentrating in searching for the one specific thing his soul desired above all else, he had scattered his energies in dallying with memories of things relating to many different affairs of the past.

Zorab murmured his profound gratutude to the Master and withdrew. He was conscious that the words of Jesus carried a double meaning for him: they urged him not to turn back from his resolve to find the Pearl of Great Price, no matter what the cost; and also not to turn back into the labyrinthian maze of his past

if he expected to keep on the true path to the Kingdom of Heaven within.

And Zorab realized beyond all doubting that nothing could ever again discourage him in his quest. . . .

THE INGREDIENT OF HOPE

Phyllis Malone

"Johnnie, God loves you just like you were the last person on this earth to love," I said to the young hospital patient with the dark picket-fence crew-cut.

"Well, I don't know much about God," he answered, scratching at his forehead while trying to consolidate his thoughts.

"O, but He knows all about you," I said. "Each morning why don't you repeat to yourself, God loves me, I'm important to God."

I didn't know just how much Johnnie's mind would comprehend when he occasionally became foggy in the middle of a sentence. His moon-shaped face, still sprinkled with an adolescent rash, appeared perplexed. I wondered what thoughts were lodged behind those questioning eyes. They seemed to be of silence.

I had been a volunteer for some time at our state hospital. I enjoyed my duty in the library. There was a cross-section of people flowing in my direction from all over the hospital. It gave me contact with more patients than if I had been spending all my time in a ward. Each Thursday morning before I unlocked the library door, I asked God to send someone my way to whom I could show His love. Because I had to have their full names to check out books for them, it didn't take me long to learn to

greet them by name as they entered the library or wherever else in the hospital we happened to meet. I had a constant opportunity to pray a prayer of healing for everyone who passed my desk: the man who would never speak, the retarded six-year-old who would run in and throw her arms around my neck, the oldster who couldn't read although a rambling conversation would seem to erect a scaffold between our minds. The hospital had an open policy; not even a fence surrounded the buildings, and the staff wore street clothes. I was startled by the fact that I saw so few patients who were middle-aged or older. The majority seemed to be in the age group of my children, not long out of their teens. Why were so many young people suffering from clouded minds?

This particular morning I felt restless. A few patients had come by just to chat, and they had seemed in exceptionally good humor. Ginny was one of them. For some time she had been telling me she was going to be married to a boy who happened to be a patient also. Romance may sometimes seem to flourish in an institution where there is so much need of love and understanding, but it rarely consummates in marriage. An often-heard remark is "I'm only here for observation. In one week I'll be gone." This is the result of modern treatment of mental illness. A patient's chances of living a normal life are now very high.

A boy close to twenty strolled in wearing baggy army fatigues. His shaggy hair, the color of scrub-water, was trying to twist its ends around his ear lobes. I recognized his name as having been on the intensive-care ward the month before. He said, "I like to come here and just sit at the end of the table and think."

I told him he was welcome to stay and think as long as the library was open today.

His period of concentration lasted ten minutes. His slender boyish figure heaved a sigh as he stood by my desk.

"I can't seem to think very well today," he muttered. "I haven't been able to think well or read a book for a long

time. But I like to come here where it's quiet."

"You're welcome any time," I answered.

He waved goodbye, and with his shoulders slouched over in a defeated attitude, he shuffled down the hall.

I asked God to heal his mind, heart, and to fill him with the Holy Spirit.

The library was empty when Johnnie entered. He wanted to check out two books, but had a mental juggling-act going on as to which two he should choose.

I asked if he remembered our conversation on how important he was to God.

"Not too well," he said.

During our discussion he mentioned that he had spent his life in the Bering Sea area. I told him which flight-stops up and down that coast line were my favorites, and asked if he ever hunted walrus and seal. His eyes became animated. He immediately wanted to talk about his experiences. He began to make drawings to show me how to shoot and skin a walrus. He told me how the hunting camps were set up and how the watch for the sea animals was operated. He especially wanted to talk about the season of the bowhead whale, which begins the last of May.

"We have a whale gun," he said, "that shoots a charge like a hand grenade and we have to be about fifteen feet from the whale when we shoot it. It explodes inside the whale. Then the boat and its crew close in and make the kill. One time the whale came up under our boat and lifted it high in the air. We didn't get thrown into the sea, but we were sure scared!"

Johnnie wanted to talk about home, many miles away, but sometimes he would stop and scratch his head vigorously.

I could see he was getting tired. I said, "I understand everything you've told me, Johnnie, and I am so pleased you discussed it with me."

A wide grin leaped across his face, and he pushed his glasses up on the bridge of his nose. "You know what?" he said. "When I came here, I didn't have any hope. But just

talking to someone who understands about my hunting gives me hope again."

I watched him walk down the corridor with a bounce in his gait and his shoulders thrown back.

"Thank you, God," I whispered, "for placing your ingredient of hope in a young man's life. Continue that growth double-fold. Amen."

MY WALNUT TREE *L. E. Tripp*

My walnut tree has grown so tall
It seems to touch the sky;
Its branches waving in the breeze,
The murmur of a sigh.

The grape vine curling 'round its trunk,
Symmetric tracery,
That dances in the fading light,
A touch of mystery.

My walnut tree... a fairy wraith
That sparkles in the sun.
A golden goddess reaching high
To say that day is done.

And as I look up in the sky
Above my walnut tree
I thank God for the blessings
That He has given me!

IN THE OCEAN OF LOVE *Monica Boyce*

My human consciousness,
with its impatience, tenseness,
eternally feels the need of immersing
in the ocean of Love.
By this baptism of Spirit,
eventually,
the curtain is dropped
on man as material...
and the image of Love
issues forth
as the stream
from its source.

GREATER ARCHES *Eleanore-Melissa*

There are handsome man-made arches
In bridges, buildings, or memory,
But the rainbow arch of God's covenant
Is more beautiful to see —
Not only for its colors
From sunshine through the rain
But for its symbolic promise
That life on earth will remain
Growing, expanding, building —
Until arch of Love is complete
And we lay our trowels and hoes aside
To kneel at Jesus' feet.

THE GIFT OF AWARENESS

Zelma S. Dennis

The amazing balance of life is often revealed in unexpected situations. I have discovered the secret of how handicapped people cope with their physical problems. They develop a keen sense of awareness. This faculty helps to compensate for the loss of some of their other senses.

A blind person finds his senses of touch, hearing, smell and taste intensified, and his sensitivity to life increased. God opens his mind and heart to help him appreciate more fully the physical world—the fragrance of flowers, the dew-drenched grass and leaves. The savory aroma of food tempts his tastebuds as never before. The healing fingers of rain and wind touch his eyes, and the gentle reassuring hands of a loved one guide his way. The arms of his easy chair encircle him. Familiar fabrics or the smoothness of a wooden door frame welcome him to a friendly home, and the rough warmth of a blanket is security when night brings its solace of dreams.

Each of the other senses is enriched after one has been taken away. Though crippled limbs may confine a person, they cannot stop the flight of his mind. Muted lips may not share aloud the soul's deep yearning, but fingers can learn to mark upon a page a visible communication.

The gift of awareness comes from the compassion of God. It reminds us that His love always provides a way to overcome each obstacle. We must open our hearts to this gift in order to enjoy God's world about us and to live life in a greater dimension.

Fortune never helps the man whose courage fails. —*Sophocles*

TAOIST MEDITATION: Close your eyes and you will see clearly. Cease to listen and you will hear the truth. Be silent and your heart will sing. Seek no contacts and you will find union. Be still and you will move forward on the tide of the spirit. Be gentle and you will need no strength. Be patient and you will achieve all things. Be humble and you will remain entire. —MIRA

THE PHARISEE *Bess Foster Smith*

I was of the wealthy and the chosen;
My Lord would never say, "Give all thou hast!"
I walked one day among a throng of people,
The meek and lonely —
Quite a different caste.

Within my heart I counselled and consoled me,
And thanked God I was not as one of these —
What could they know,
This seething mass of brute-flesh,
Of life's high purpose or of God's decrees.

From somewhere there arose a sudden riot —
And something would have struck me on the head;
But one of these sprang forth as my protector,
Gave all he had —
And lay before me dead.

A sickening remorse arose within me ----
Before me yawned a bottomless abyss —
And then I heard a voice
With deep compassion
Say, "No man hath greater love than this!"

NOTICES AND COMMENT

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE has been enlarged so that more writers than usual might express their thoughts and feelings to you during this holiday season. Fellowship in Prayer is grateful for their continuing interest and support throughout the year.

NEW CONTRIBUTING EDITOR. Helen Gee Woods, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, has generously accepted the Fellowship's invitation to serve as a Contributing Editor of the publication. Born in Idaho, Mrs. Woods is the mother of two sons. She began writing in 1933 and is the author of three books of poetry and editor of eight other volmes which include anthologies and histories. She is currently editor of *The Poets' Guild.*

FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS. Along with all the meetings held during their trip to Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia (which was described in the Newsletter sent to members in November), Executive Secretary Kathryn G. Brown and Executive Director Paul Griffith are planning more meetings for the future. In November he spoke to the Women's Guild at St. John's Episcopal Church in Tuckahoe, N.Y. Meetings that will be held in New York City will be announced well in advance.

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